

AUSTRALIAN CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION ALLIANCE



MEDIA RELEASE

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Leading health groups urge action on chronic disease as new data reveals impact of COVID-19

Leading health groups are urging the Federal Government to invest in actions to support healthy eating and active living as part of the National Preventive Health Strategy, as a new report highlights high rates of overweight and obesity as an ongoing concern.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare today released its *Australia's Health 2022* report, which paints a picture of our health in the wake of COVID-19.

Nearly 1 in 2 Australians are living with a chronic disease and 1 in 5 Australians are living with multiple conditions. Two out of every three Australians are overweight or obese, and one in four children are overweight or obese.

Unhealthy diets and overweight and obesity are major risk factors for heart attack, stroke, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, and certain cancers.

The Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance (ACDPA) – comprised of the Heart Foundation, Cancer Council Australia, Kidney Health Australia, Diabetes Australia and Stroke Foundation – is today calling on the Federal Government to respond by investing in the National Preventive Health Strategy and supporting actions that enable Australians to eat well and move more.

“The new report shows that many of us are overweight or obese, which puts us at risk of developing one or more chronic conditions,” said Chris Forbes Chair of ACDPA and CEO of Kidney Health Australia.

“A huge amount of chronic disease burden – nearly 40 percent - could be prevented by reducing risk factors like unhealthy diets, smoking, overweight and obesity, physical inactivity, alcohol consumption, and high blood pressure.”

“The National Preventive Health Strategy was released last year with a focus on healthy eating and physical activity, but it needs funding to achieve real gains,” said Mr Forbes.

The new health report shows that deaths from chronic diseases – were higher than expected in early 2022, while access to GP management plans for chronic conditions dipped during COVID-19 outbreaks and lockdowns.

“The pandemic has had an enormous impact on the health of Australians. Supporting Australians to reduce their risk of chronic disease would keep more of us healthy and out of hospitals at a time of great strain on our healthcare system. It really is a win-win,” Mr Forbes said.

“Australia is lagging behind other Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries on reducing overweight and obesity, so we must do more to protect the future health and wellbeing of Australians.”

Mr Forbes said, “In the meantime, we encourage people to visit the [ACDPA website](#) where we have some handy advice on how to reduce your risk of chronic disease.”

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About the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance (ACDPA)

The Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance (ACDPA) brings together Cancer Council Australia, Diabetes Australia, Heart Foundation, Kidney Health Australia, and Stroke Foundation to collectively promote prevention, risk assessment, and early detection of chronic disease.

Together we represent the millions of Australians living with cancer, heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, and diabetes. www.acdpa.org.au